

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----021700 281113Z /17  
Z 281031Z DEC 77 ZFF-4  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 202  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 11160

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PROG, PBOR, IS, JO, EG, US  
SUBJECT: HUSSEIN ROLE IN WEST BANK/GAZA DIALOGUE

REF: STATE 307029

1. THERE IS NO QUESTION NOW THAT THE ISRAELIS WANT HUSSEIN TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. BEGIN HAS ASKED US BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY TO TRY TO PERSUADE HIM, AND A MAJOR THEME OF OPPOSITON CRITICISM OF BEGIN'S SELF-RULE PROPOSAL FOCUSES ON THE VAGUENESS OF JORDAN'S POTENTIAL ROLE. THE ISRAELIS DON'T HAVE TO BE ENCOURAGED BY US TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH HUSSEIN. THEY WILL JUMP AT THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF READINESS ON THE JORDANIAN SIDE TO JOIN THE ISRAELI/EGYPTIAN TANGO. THE PROBLEM IS RATHER ON THE EAST BANK OF THE JORDAN.

2. THE ISRAELIS ARE CERTAINLY NOT INSENSITIVE TO HUSSEIN'S VERY REAL DILEMMA. DAYAN CONTINUES TO BE CONVINCED THAT HUSSEIN WILL NOT RISK JOINING THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

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TIATIONS SO LONG AS HE IS NOT ASSURED HE WILL GET ALL OF HIS TERRITORY BACK. WEIZMAN TOLD ME LAST NIGHT, DECEMBER 27, THAT HE QUITE HONESTLY WOULD NOT JOIN IN IF HE WEREIN HUSSEIN'S SHOES, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HE, LIKE DAYAN, BELIEVES IT IS ESSENTIAL TO NEGOTIATE SOME LINK WITH JORDAN AS A GUARANTEE THAT BEGIN'S SELF-RULE PLAN WILL NOT LEAD IRREVOCABLY TO AN INDEPENDENT

PALESTINIAN STATE. BEGIN HAS CONFIRMED TO ME HIS READINESS AND INDEED HIS DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE WITH JORDAN OVER NOT ONLY THE CITIZENSHIP DIVISIONS OF HIS PROPOSALS BUT ALSO OTHER ASPECTS. IF JORDAN ENTERS THE RING, HUSSEIN WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO AFFECT MANY ASPECTS OF THE SELF-RULE SCHEME. BUT I SUPPOSE HIS DILEMMA WILL REMAIN; HE CANNOT HAVE ANY ASSURANCE OF REESTABLISHING THE STATUS QUO ANTI IN THE WEST BANK.

3. AFTER READING HERMAN EILTS' ACCOUNT OF SADAT'S REACTIONS TO THE ISMAILIA CONFERENCE, I CONFESS THAT I AM QUITE UNCLEAR AS TO HOW SADAT WANTS TO PLAY THE HUSSEIN ANGLE. HE SEEMS TO BE SAYING THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER FOR THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE TO GO AHEAD AND THRASH AROUND ON THE PALESTINAIN PROBLEM WITHOUT HUSSEIN FOR A WHILE, COUNTING ON US TO BRING SUFFICIENT PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS TO GET THEM TO ACCEPT PUBLICLY SELF-DETERMINATION AS THE BASIS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. IF THIS IS HIS ASSUMPTION, I FEAR THAT IT IS LIKELY TO BE THE SOURCE OF CONSIDERABLE FRUSTRATION AND DISILLUSIONMENT. IN THE PRESENT STATE OF ISRAELI PUBLIC THINKING AND POLITICAL REACTION TO BEGIN'S PROPOSALS, IT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR BEGIN TO GO MUCH FARTHER THAN HE HAS ALREADY GONE IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE. MOREOVER, FROM MY TALKS WITH HIM, I THINK IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE HIM TO SHIFT FROM THE PHRASE "SELF-RULE"

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TO THE PHRASE "SELF-DETERMINATION", NO MATTER HOW DESIRABLE THAT SHIFT MIGHT APPEAR. A MORE PROMISING PROPSOECT, I THINK, IS TO WORK ON THE FIVE-YEAR REVIEW CONCEPT TO TRANSFORM IT INTO A MORE CLEARLY STATED TEMPORARY, INTERMIM ARRANGEMENT FOR THE NEW SELF-RULE REGIME. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT WOULD BE IN HUSSEIN'S INTERESTS AS WELL AS OURS FOR HIM TO BE IN A POSITION TO LEAD BEGIN DIRECTLY TO THIS OUTCOME.

4. AS TO THEQUESTION OF WHETHER WE SHOULD PRESS HUSSEIN INTO A BILATERAL DIALOGUE, OR TRY TO PROMOTE A THREE-WAY DIALOGUE WITH OURSELVES IN THE MIDDLE, I CONFESS NOT TO HAVE A FIRM OPINION. I CAN SEE GOOD ARGUMENTS ON BOTH SIDES. IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL TRY HARD TO GET THIS INTO THE BILATERAL CHANNEL AS THEY HAVE DONE IN THE PAST. BUT IF THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT A THREE-WAY DIALOGUE IS THE ONLY WAY OF INVOLVING HUSSEIN, I FEEL SURE THEY WILL GRACEFULLY ACCEDE TO IT. I CAN SEE SOME ARGUMENTS FROM THE U.S. POINT OF VIEW IN NOT BEING IN THE MIDDLE ON THIS ONE IN THE NEXT STAGE IN TERMS OF OUR OWN RELATIONS WITH OTHER ARAB STATES. BUT THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING HUSSEIN BEFORE THINGS GO ANY FURTHER DOWN THE

BILATERAL TRACK BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT SEEMS TO ME TO  
OUTWEIGHT THE RISKS FOR US.

5. IT MAKES LITTLE SENSE TO APPROACH THE ISRAELIS  
FURTHER ON THIS UNTIL WE HAVE THINGS SORTED OUT WITH  
HUSSEIN. THE PROBLEM IS TO TRY TO CONVINC HIM THAT  
FURTHER FENCE-SITTING IS LIKELY TO PRODUCE YET ANOTHER  
ONE OF THOSE MISSED OPPORTUNITIES WHICH LITTER THE LAND-  
SCAPE OF PAST PEACEMAKING EFFORTS BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL.  
I HOPE THAT OUT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S MEETINGS WITH  
HUSSEIN LATER THIS WEEK HE MIGHT COME TO THIS CONCLUSION  
ON HIS OWN, ACCEPTING TOM PICKERING'S POINT THAT  
IT IS A DECISION HE HAS TO MAKE AND SHOULD NOT BE PRESSURED  
TO MAKE BY THE UNITED STATES. IF HE DOES CONCLUDE ON THE  
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BASIS OF HIS CONTACTS WITH SADAT AND WITH US THAT HE  
NEEDS TO JOIN IN SOME FORM, WE OUGHT THEN TO MOVE AS RAPIDLY  
AS POSSIBLE THEN TO TRY TO HELP BOTH SIDES TO WORK OUT  
THE MODALITIES, EITHER BILATERAL OR TRILATERAL. THE FIRST  
APPROACH HERE SHOULD BE DIRECTLY TO BEGIN.  
LEWIS

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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